

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: Madam Speaker, today I am proud to stand before this chamber and introduce the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2007. This bill was first introduced in the Senate by my friend and fellow Virginia colleague, Senator **JIM WEBB**, earlier this year.

Not since Pearl Harbor has a single event so shaped a generation until the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Like Pearl Harbor, September 11th became a call to arms for many Americans to join the Armed Forces.

For the 15 million veterans who returned home from World War II, Congress passed the first G.I. Bill of Rights of 1944. The first G.I. Bill helped veterans readjust to civilian life and afforded them the opportunity to do something that many had missed out on--getting a college education. That first G.I. Bill paid for veterans' tuition, books, fees, room and board, and even provided them a monthly stipend. Approximately 7.8 million World War II veterans used the benefits in the G.I. Bill of 1944 to increase their quality of life through education.

After World War II, Congress passed several other G.I. Bills to provide educational benefits for veterans returning home from the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Since the Vietnam War, Congress passed two G.I. Bills that established peacetime educational benefits for members of the all volunteer Armed Services. Although the current Montgomery G.I. Bill of 1985 provides peacetime educational benefits, the current program was not designed to meet the needs of our current global situation--a situation in which several hundred thousand men and woman in uniform are fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq. Our military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq have strained our entire all-volunteer military, forcing many of our Reservist and National Guard units into extended tours of duty. Many of our men and women in the Army, Air Force, Navy, and the Marine Corps have served more than one tour of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan.

With hundreds of thousands of our brave men and woman currently fighting overseas in Afghanistan and Iraq, we need a new G.I. Bill to honor these veterans when they all finally return home. The Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2007 is designed to expand the educational benefits that our nation offers to our brave men and women who have served us so honorably and who have sacrificed so much since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The bill that I am introducing today is designed to give this generation, who took it upon themselves to enlist after 9/11, benefits very similar to those provided to the veterans of World

War II.

Madam Speaker, the bill that I am introducing today would specifically increase educational benefits to members of the military who have served at least 2 years of active duty, with at least some period of active duty time served beginning on or after September 11, 2001. Veterans will be eligible to receive these benefits for no more than 36 months or 4 academic years and would have 15 years to exercise these benefits. The version of this legislation that I am introducing today limits benefit payments to the cost of the most expensive public institution in the state in which the veteran is enrolled. If the veteran chooses to attend a private institution, the veteran must pay the difference between the cost of the college of his or her choice and the most expensive public institution of the state in which the veteran is enrolled. Like the G.I. Bill of 1944, the Post-9/11 G.I. bill will pay for tuition, books, fees, room and board, and provide a monthly stipend of \$1,000.

Madam Speaker, while in law school, I was privileged to serve in the Massachusetts National Guard and the U.S. Army Reserves. I fortunately was never called into active duty, but the circumstances of our global situation today have pulled thousands of Guard and Reservists out of college into active duty. I am proud to represent the Third Congressional District of Virginia which is home to thousands of military personnel. You can't go very far in my district without running into a military installation or a member of our Armed Forces. I see the sacrifices of our men and women and their families each and every time I return home.

Madam Speaker, it is time that we pass a G.I. Bill on the same scale of the first G.I. Bill that was passed at the end of World War II to meet the sacrifices of this generation. I am pleased to join Senator **WEBB** by introducing the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2007 in the House today and I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.